



San Diego City Attorney **MICHAEL J. AGUIRRE**

NEWS RELEASE

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LEGAL ADVISOR TO FORMER GOVERNOR AND MT. SOLEDAD ATTORNEY ARE PART OF CITY ATTORNEY'S RESTRUCTURING TO BROADEN CITY'S MUNICIPAL LEGAL TEAM

San Diego, CA: The hiring of a legal advisor to former California Governor George Deukmejian and the promotion of the deputy city attorney who wrote the successful appeal that convinced the U.S. Supreme Court to suspend the removal of the Mt. Soledad War Memorial cross are two major changes in the City Attorney's Office. The City Attorney's Office has an annual budget of \$36 million and has 305 staff members, which include 156 attorneys.

Since assuming office, City Attorney Michael Aguirre has hired numerous private sector and government-experienced attorneys who are recognized as experts in their fields, with many decades of successful litigation experience among them. In addition to recruiting top attorneys, Aguirre has also recognized and promoted several attorneys who have been with the City Attorney's Office for many years.

"My job as City Attorney is to build the most outstanding team possible. Our Office owes it to the City of San Diego to be hard-working and above reproach, while putting the interests of the citizens of San Diego above all else," said Aguirre. "I'm pleased to announce the hiring and promotion of attorneys who have demonstrated those values."

Assistant City Attorney Huston Carlyle will be leading the Redevelopment Section in the Civil Division of the City Attorney's Office, one of the most critical practices of law today because of San Diego's active real estate market, and numerous Redevelopment Areas in the City. Carlyle served the former Governor and most recently served as Senior Assistant City Attorney for the City of San Bernardino prior to coming to San Diego.

Deputy City Attorney David Karlin is eager to head the Consumer and Environmental Protection Unit in the Criminal Division. Karlin is committed to reinvigorating the Unit by aggressively pursuing environmental and commerce cases that greatly affect consumers in San Diego. Karlin is the attorney who succeeded in obtaining a stay order from U.S. Supreme Court Justice William Kennedy, which was accompanied by a four-page legal opinion – a nearly unprecedented act.

Among City Attorney Aguirre's hires and promotions are the following:
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CIVIL DIVISION

Donald Shanahan, Litigation Division

A former Assistant U.S. Attorney since 1971, Shanahan spent four years in the criminal division of that office, then 30 years specializing in civil litigation, including medical malpractice, tort claims, bankruptcy, and employment discrimination. He has appeared on numerous cases before the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, and more than 100 trials. In addition, Shanahan has negotiated numerous million-dollar-plus settlements. Shanahan is a graduate of Providence College in Rhode Island, and was awarded his J.D. in 1967 at the University of Oklahoma.

Mark Blake, Chief Deputy City Attorney, Finance, Securities and Disclosure Unit

Blake joined the City Attorney's Office in April, 2005. Previously, he worked with the City and County of San Francisco as Deputy City Attorney specializing in the issuance of debt obligations. He has served as Deputy General Counsel for the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, and as a Public Finance Attorney for the firms of Brown and Wood, LLP and Kraft & McKinnon. Blake was awarded his J.D. from Georgetown University in 1985 and then earned an MBA from The Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania. He has been a member of the California Bar since 1988.

Deputy City Attorneys who are part of the Finance, Securities and Disclosure Unit with extensive municipal finance experience are **Brant Will** and **Lourdes Epley**.

Shirley Edwards, Chief of the Land Use & Environmental Section

Edwards has over 15 years of comprehensive environmental, litigation and advisory experience, including direct involvement in CEQA, NEPA, Clean Air Act, Endangered Species Act and other related environmental matters. Prior to joining the City Attorney's office, Edwards was the Directing Attorney for the Stockton office of the California Rural Legal Assistance, Inc. (CRLA) and also worked for over a decade as an environmental and prosecuting attorney for and on behalf of enforcement agencies at the federal and state level. She is a San Diego native and a graduate of the University of San Diego where she obtained her B.A., M.B.A., J.D., and L.L.M.

R. Clayton Welch, Revenue and Recovery Section

Welch is a multi-faceted attorney with 20 years experience in civil litigation. He graduated from the University of San Diego in 1986 then passed the Hawaii bar in 1986 and the California bar in 1990. Welch practiced business and civil litigation for four years in Hawaii, then practiced insurance defense with Chapin Fleming & Winet and with State Farm Insurance as house counsel until August 1998. For the next seven years, he practiced in the area of subrogation for State Farm, with actual recovery in excess of \$4.5 million dollars through 2005. He was hired by the City Attorney's Office in April 2006.

Catherine Bradley, Chief Deputy City Attorney, Business and Government Section

Bradley has been practicing law for over 25 years. She began her practice in a private civil litigation firm in San Diego, serving three years as a partner of the firm. After nine years in private practice, she was hired by the Office of the City Attorney where she tried criminal cases and served as the Head of the Criminal Division's Appellate Unit. Later Bradley transferred to the Civil Division serving in the Worker's Compensation Unit and
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Public Works Unit. For the last four years, Bradley has been working in the Business and Government Unit and has been instrumental in advising on legal issues relating to the transition to a Strong Mayor form of government. She also serves as the advisor to the City Council Committee on Rules, Open Government, and Intergovernmental Affairs.

Sharon Spivak, Business and Government Section

Spivak has 10 years of experience as a civil litigator in private practice, including eight years with Gray Cary Ware & Freidenrich, where she handled business, unfair competition, mass tort and First Amendment cases. Spivak previously spent 13 years working in the media. She is a former newspaper reporter who covered local, state and national politics for the *San Diego Union-Tribune* and has served as a legal and political analyst for a local television station. Spivak received her undergraduate degree in journalism from Northwestern University and her J.D., *cum laude*, from the University of San Diego School of Law. Spivak is an advisory attorney to the City Council and also serves as the legal advisor to the City's Elections Task Force.

Deputy City Attorney **Paul Prather**, with 16 years of municipal law experience in Tulsa, Oklahoma prior to joining the City Attorney's Office, was recently added to the Business and Government Section.

Jessica Falk Michelli, Chief Deputy City Attorney, Labor and Employment Unit

In December 2002, Michelli began her career in the City Attorney's Office as a Deputy City Attorney in the trial unit of the Criminal Division. In June 2004, she was promoted to Senior Deputy City Attorney and became the supervising attorney for the Trial Setting Department. Michelli was promoted to the Labor and Employment Section in the Civil Division in December 2004 and became Chief in August 2006. Her responsibilities include providing legal support on labor relations matters, and advising all City departments regarding a range of employment and personnel related issues, such as discipline, leave, Equal Employment Opportunity laws, and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Michelli received her bachelor's degree in Political Science and Rhetoric from the University of California, Berkeley and interned at the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the Department of Justice in Washington, D.C.

Regina Silva, Labor and Employment Section

Silva works in the areas of Labor and Employment law. Prior to joining the City Attorney's office, she worked for seven years in a private practice firm in Orange County, also covering employment and labor law. Before that she represented several government agencies as a prosecutor in Sacramento. Silva obtained her undergraduate degree in political science from U.C. Berkeley and her J.D. from University of the Pacific, McGeorge School of Law.

Pete DeLara, Real Property Section

DeLara has worked in the City Attorney's office since 1996 as a legal assistant. Over the past ten years, he has been assigned to over 25 attorneys and has worked in most of the civil division units, including the trial unit, police legal, real property, public works, employment, and the pension team. During this time, DeLara worked toward and completed a law degree from Western Sierra law school. DeLara was admitted to the California Bar in November of 2005 and is now a Deputy City Attorney.

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Malinda Dickenson, Land Use and Environmental Section

Dickenson is a native San Diegan and has spent four years in private practice gaining expertise in California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) legislation. She is the recipient of the Professor Robert-Delores Simmons Award for Excellence in Environmental Law Practice.

Nina-Fain Newman, Land Use and Environmental Section

Fain-Newman graduated magna *cum laude* receiving her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the University of North Texas in 1998. She went on to receive her J.D. from California Western School of Law in 2004, where she also graduated magna *cum laude*. During law school, Fain-Newman served as President of the Environmental Law Society and as National Outreach Co-Chair of the National Association of Environmental Law Societies. Fain-Newman has worked for the Honorable John A. Houston of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of California in 2004, and worked as an attorney doing complex business litigation from 2005 to 2006.

Carmen Brock, Land Use and Environmental Section

Brock has 16 years of experience representing municipal and public agencies. She has specialized in the area of public land use litigation in both state and federal courts and is a Deputy City Attorney with the Civil Division.

Bob Walters, General Litigation

Bob Walters has over 20 years experience in civil litigation and appellate matters in both the public and private sector. He originally came from Wyoming where he worked for the Attorney General's Office. After moving to California, he worked with the cities of Escondido and Vista. His private litigation experience included representations of public entities and complex matters, as well as defense of design professionals and medical professionals. Walters has been very involved in his community, as a former member of the Tierrasanta Community Council, a board member of the Waste Management Advisory Board, as well as a member of boards of local schools. He currently is president of the Serra High School Foundation. Bob is a Deputy City Attorney in the Trial Unit of the Civil Division.

George Schaefer, General Litigation Section

Schaefer joined the Civil Litigation Section with a record of over 110 jury trials and over 100 appeals, including two death penalty cases. Schaefer has been an attorney since 1980 with a law degree from the University of Florida College of Law. He previously held the position of District Attorney in Alaska. Prior to working for the City Attorney, Schaefer headed up his own law firm with offices in Florida and California. He is admitted to practice in four states, the District of Columbia, and before the United States Supreme Court.

Chris Shurland, General Litigation Section

Shurland began his legal career in the City Attorney's Office and returned after working for the private firm of Greco Traficante & Edwards. His law degree was awarded from the University of San Diego in 2003. He graduated with a Bachelor's of Science degree in business administration from the University of Phoenix.

Michael Calabrese, Public Works Section

Calabrese received a degree in philosophy from the University of Michigan in 1990. He then spent five years as a staff member for the Michigan State Senate. After earning his law degree from Michigan State in 1999, he
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spent seven years in private practice, mainly working on utility issues. He moved to San Diego in late 2005, and became a Deputy City Attorney in May of 2006.

Steve Lastomirsky, Public Works Section

Lastomirsky has been an attorney for 12 years and has an LLM in Taxation and is admitted to practice in five states. Lastomirsky is also an expert in Intellectual Property Law.

Raymond Palmucci, Public Works Section

Palmucci began his legal career with the San Diego County District Attorney's Office. As a member of the Litigation and Transactional Law sections at a prominent Orange County firm, he developed his litigation practice by focusing on land use, water law, municipal law and environmental law. Ray also advised several water districts in Orange County.

CRIMINAL DIVISION

Christopher Morris, Assistant City Attorney, Head of the Criminal Division

Morris is a veteran in the City Attorney's Office with more than 10 years of experience in various aspects of law, first joining as a Criminal Division deputy city attorney in 1995. Morris has since worked in the Civil Division Trial Unit, Construction Litigation, Head Deputy of the Employment Services Unit, Chief Deputy, Business and Government Section and, since May 2005, Assistant City Attorney, Special Projects. In July 2005 he was named head of the Criminal Division, supervising over 80 criminal prosecutors. Morris obtained his undergraduate degree from San Diego State University, *cum laude*, and his J.D. from Brigham Young University, *cum laude*. He is fluent in Spanish.

Margaret Jacobo, Assistant City Attorney, Operations & Management

In November 2005, Jacobo was promoted to Chief Deputy City Attorney of the Criminal Division, and in July 2006, she was appointed as Assistant City Attorney of the Criminal Division. Jacobo received a B.A. from George Washington University, graduating *cum laude*, majoring in Political Science with a minor in Spanish - Language & Literature. She received her J.D. from the University of San Diego School of Law in 1999. Before joining the City Attorney's Office, Jacobo served as an assistant U.S. attorney in the U.S. Attorney's Office here in the Southern District of California, where she conducted federal grand jury investigations and prosecuted cases involving drug smuggling, embezzlement, assaults on federal officers, robbery and immigration-related offenses. While with the U.S. Attorney's Office, she conducted several jury trials and argued numerous times before the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. She joined the City Attorney's Office in December 2003 in the Criminal Division and later transferred to the Civil Division in the Public Works Section.

Kimberly A. Urie, Head Deputy City Attorney, Public Integrity Unit

Urie practiced law in New York City, starting as a public defender with the Legal Aid Society and later joined the highly regarded white-collar defense firm, Obermaier, Morvillo and Abramowitz. While there, she handled internal investigations for a national securities broker dealer, the representation of subjects, targets and witnesses in federal grand jury investigations relating to fraud and political corruption involving a national

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rental car corporation, a "big ten" international accounting firm, and a U.S. Congressman. Returning to California, Urie spent several years in the Los Angeles offices of national law firms handling financial institutions fraud, government contracts fraud, environmental crime, and representing elected officials in misconduct investigations. She was also a member of the Federal Indigent Defense Panel for the Central District of California for several years. Kim earned her J.D. from New York University; she is an honors graduate in Community Studies from the University of California, Santa Cruz, and has an M.F.A. in Film producing from the University of California, Los Angeles. She has been the lead attorney in the Criminal Division's Public Integrity Unit since December 2005.

The Criminal Division of the San Diego City Attorney's Office hires two classes of new deputy city attorneys in June and December of each year. The classes are generally comprised of attorneys recently admitted to the California Bar.

"Since our jurisdiction to prosecute crimes is limited to misdemeanors, young prosecutors wishing to prosecute felonies apply to work at the District Attorney's Office. In that regard, every year about a dozen deputy city attorneys who have gained experience in handling criminal cases are hired away by the District Attorney," said Margaret Jacobo.

In December 2005, the Criminal Division welcomed aboard the following attorneys: **Andrew Aguilar, Amy Bamberg, Jorge del Portillo, Angela Geisler, Morgan Hezlep, Michael Hudson, Scott Pirrello, Anne Richardson, LeAnna Shields, Markecia Simmons, and Shelley Webb.** In June 2006, the Criminal Division welcomed aboard the following attorneys: **Melissa Ables, Darren Bean, Andres Carnahan, Matthew Davis, Terri Hunt, Drew Lyman, Luis Mendez, Andrea Ochaba, Eric Pooch, James Queenan, Kelly Ranansignhe, Cherie Somerville, Landy Spencer, and Meredith Whiteley.**

City Attorney staff is currently hired through recruitment and review by the hiring team consisting of Assistant City Attorneys Chris Morris, Margaret Jacobo, and Karen Heumann and Deputy City Attorneys Kathryn Burton and Abbe Wolfsheimer Stutz.

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